

The current authorization for this protection expires on December 21, 2021. H.R. 5545, as amended, would extend it through June 1 of 2021. This would provide veterans and schools with the certainty that students will not see a reduction in their monthly housing checks this school year.

The bill also includes changes to ensure that GI bill students can attend foreign schools and give American schools time to comply with new consumer protection rules.

It includes a change to the VA's rounding-out policy to allow students to retain their full monthly housing allowance, even if they finish their program-required coursework early.

Finally, it also includes language sponsored by Congressman LAMB and Congressman MANN to remove the cap on the equal employment opportunity counselors at the VA. There is no place for discrimination at the VA. I am pleased that we can, once again, pass this important provision to help employees avail themselves of their right for a safe workplace.

The costs of this bill are fully paid for by extending current VA home loan funding fees for a few months into 2030. This is a bipartisan offset that has been used multiple times in previous Congresses.

This issue of whether to offset the estimated \$220 million mandatory costs associated with this bill has been an issue of disagreement for many weeks, and I want to thank Chairman TAKANO for working with me and finding a mutually beneficial solution that is paid for and can quickly pass the Senate. This is win for the veterans, schools, and taxpayers alike.

□ 1030

In the vast majority of circumstances, I strongly believe that Congress should do our job and pay for this new spending. We have a responsibility to pay for our bills, just like every American does. However, that does not mean that I will not consider the use of emergency spending when it is appropriate and necessary in the future as new emergencies may arise.

Before I close, I would like to thank the dozens of higher education groups and veterans service organizations that have advocated for the passage of this needed extension and reform.

I want to especially thank the American Council on Education and the Student Veterans of America for their continued support for this fully paid for legislation. They understand that if these changes are not made soon, many schools will be forced to stop accepting students who are using the GI Bill. I agree with them that such an outcome is simply unacceptable.

While I wish we could have enacted these protections weeks ago, I am glad we are taking care of them today on a bipartisan basis that protects veterans and taxpayers alike.

I, again, want to thank Chairman TAKANO for working with me and oth-

ers on this issue, as well as our colleagues, Senators TESTER and MORAN, for their support.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. TRONE), my good friend and the author of H.R. 5545, as amended. He is a member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee and an active member on the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity and the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.

Mr. TRONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of our bill, the REMOTE Learning Act, to protect veterans' education benefits.

Last year, Congress prevented cuts to veterans' tuition payments as students transitioned to online learning. This helped folks stay in school during the pandemic, which remains one of the most challenging times to pursue higher education.

Unfortunately, these benefits are at risk once again. By law, the Department of Veterans Affairs is required to cut housing benefits for student veterans who are taking classes remotely. This doesn't make sense during a global pandemic.

While some colleges and professors have chosen to keep classes remote, many student veterans have opted to live on campus. We need to act now to ensure our veterans receive the necessary flexibility to achieve academic success.

The REMOTE Learning Act will extend remote learning waivers, ensure veterans receive full housing benefits, allow universities to continue recruiting foreign students so that student bodies can remain diverse, and minimize paperwork for tuition reimbursement.

Our veterans deserve a world-class education. They deserve to earn their degrees on time. Some of these brave servicemembers have waited their whole lives to get their degrees. The negative effects of the pandemic shouldn't hinder them from doing that. We have a responsibility to help.

I want to thank Chairman TAKANO and Chairman LEVIN for their leadership on this bill and for all the hard work they have done to protect our veterans. It is time to pass this bill and give the veterans the benefits they have earned.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I just want to let everyone know that I am very much in support of this legislation. I encourage my colleagues to support it as well, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume for the purpose of closing.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the work and cooperation of the ranking member, and I appreciate that he stands squarely behind this legislation.

What is at stake at the very end of this year is the housing of our Nation's

student veterans, numbering in the tens of thousands. We need swift passage of this bill and the companion bill in the Senate.

I urge all Members of the House to support this bill, and I urge our Senate colleagues to act on this expeditiously.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 5545, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5545, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to extend certain expiring provisions of law relating to benefits provided under Department of Veterans Affairs educational assistance programs during COVID-19 pandemic, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NASA ENHANCED USE LEASING EXTENSION ACT OF 2021

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5746) to amend title 51, United States Code, to extend the authority of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to enter into leases of non-excess property of the Administration, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5746

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "NASA Enhanced Use Leasing Extension Act of 2021".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress find the following:

(1) NASA uses enhanced use leasing to enter into agreements with private sector entities, State and local governments, academic institutions, and other Federal agencies for lease of non-excess, underutilized NASA properties and facilities.

(2) NASA uses enhanced use leasing authority to support responsible management of its real property, including to improve the use of underutilized property for activities that are compatible with NASA's mission and to reduce facility operating and maintenance costs.

(3) In fiscal year 2019, under its enhanced use lease authority, NASA leased 65 real properties.

(4) In fiscal year 2019, NASA's use of enhanced use leasing resulted in the collection of \$10,843,025.77 in net revenue.

(5) In fiscal year 2019, NASA used a portion of its enhanced use leasing revenues for repairs of facility control systems such as lighting and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning.

(6) NASA's use of enhanced use leasing authority can contribute to reducing the rate of increase of the Agency's overall deferred maintenance cost.

SEC. 3. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY TO ENTER INTO LEASES OF NON-EXCESS PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION.

Section 20145(g) of title 51, United States Code, is amended by striking “December 31, 2021” and inserting “December 31, 2031”.

SEC. 4. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled “Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation” for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BEYER) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BABIN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 5746, the bill now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support passage of the bipartisan NASA Enhanced Use Leasing Extension Act of 2021, H.R. 5746.

I want to thank my colleagues, Ranking Member BRIAN BABIN of the Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics, Representative TROY CARTER, and Representative YOUNG KIM, for being original cosponsors.

Mr. Speaker, this is a commonsense bill that would enable public- and private-sector entities the opportunity to benefit from NASA property that is not fully used, while helping NASA manage its vast facilities and maintenance challenges.

The act would extend NASA’S authority to enter into leases for underutilized, non-excess real property, including office space, testing and launch facilities, and hangars, to other Federal, State, and local government agencies, academic institutions, and private-sector entities.

NASA’s existing enhanced use lease authority, or EUL, expires on the last day of this month, December 31, 2021.

While several short-term extensions have previously been enacted, this act provides a clean, 10-year extension that will create more certainty for NASA and the many EUL partners who benefit from the authority. According to the July 2021 NASA testimony to the Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics, that I chair and Dr. BABIN is the ranking member of, the agency has 70 ongoing leases at six NASA centers.

The authority also allows NASA to retain lease revenue and apply it to-

ward maintenance, capital revitalization, and improvement of NASA’s real property assets.

That is important because with the majority of NASA’s facilities dating back to the Apollo era and over 80 percent beyond their design life, maintenance is an ongoing challenge. NASA currently manages a deferred maintenance backlog of \$2.6 billion. The revenue NASA receives from enhanced use leases, \$10.8 million in fiscal year 2019, can help avoid further increases to that backlog.

EUL authority also benefits the private entities, the Federal, State, and local government agencies, and the academic institutions that enter into lease agreements to use specialized facilities and properties, such as launch infrastructure, while also providing the valuable service to NASA of maintaining the properties.

In addition, co-locating other Federal, State, and local government agencies, private-sector entities, and other institutions on NASA properties creates a vibrancy and community at NASA centers that benefits NASA and its workforce, including through partnerships with those institutions.

Mr. Speaker, NASA’s leadership and success in expanding our knowledge through groundbreaking scientific discoveries and extending human presence deeper into space inspires our youth, advances our technological capacity, and strengthens our economy.

Enabling such an inspiring mission requires unique infrastructure and extensive property and facilities. We need to ensure that NASA has the tools and flexibilities to continue its successes for decades to come. Those tools include the ability to manage property that may no longer be actively or fully used by NASA, at least at this time.

The bipartisan NASA Enhanced Use Leasing Extension Act of 2021 ensures the benefits of EUL authority will continue for the next decade, and in so doing, provides stability to NASA and its EUL partners.

Mr. Speaker, this bipartisan bill is good for NASA, good for the entities that benefit from EUL authority, and good for the taxpayer.

We cannot afford to let this important authority lapse and risk delays and disruption to the many new leases currently being processed by NASA.

I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” and support passage of H.R. 5746 so that the Senate can swiftly pass it and send it to the President’s desk for signature and enactment.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support strong of H.R. 5746, the NASA Enhanced Use Leasing Extension Act of 2021, legislation that I cosponsored, to extend NASA’s enhanced use leasing authority, which expires on December 31.

NASA has used enhanced use leases for almost 20 years to enter into ar-

rangements to lease idle or underutilized areas on NASA property to the private sector, to State and local governments, and to academic institutions and universities.

NASA can then use some of the money raised from the leases to offset spending for facilities maintenance, capital revitalization, and real property improvements. NASA expects to collect over \$14 million in net revenue in 2022 from enhanced use leases and apply that money to its deferred maintenance backlog.

The last extension of the enhanced use lease authority was for 2 years. H.R. 5746 will extend it for 10 years, until December 31, 2031.

This 10-year authority will give NASA and its partners the flexibility and predictability to enter into longer term leases, which could reduce the burden on taxpayers and help the United States’ commercial space industry continue to compete and out-innovate the world.

I proudly represent the Johnson Space Center of Houston, Texas. As a strong advocate for this vital NASA center, as well as for all of our NASA centers, I want to make sure that we are doing the utmost to empower the brilliant men and women supporting our space industry, scientific discovery, and human exploration.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. CARTER).

Mr. CARTER of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, NASA’s Michoud Assembly Facility in New Orleans, Louisiana, is known as America’s rocket factory.

For over 55 years, Michoud has manufactured large vehicles and components for NASA, from the Apollo program to the space shuttle to the Space Launch System, or the SLS.

Michoud is the main manufacturing and assembly site for SLS, which will take us to the furthest reaches of our solar system.

This site employs approximately 3,500 people but supports more than 6,000 jobs nationwide. This includes government civil service workers, contractors, and staff of other government agencies, as well as commercial firms, including firms from Louisiana that create a significant number of jobs and economic opportunities.

The National Center for Advanced Manufacturing, a partnership between NASA, the State of Louisiana, Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, and the University of New Orleans, also calls Michoud home. The total economic output of Michoud is over \$830 million.

All this to say, Michoud is an indispensable part of the New Orleans’ economy, New Orleans’ community, and our Nation’s space program.

Sites like Michoud would benefit greatly from the passage of H.R. 5746, which reauthorizes the enhanced use leases needed to keep up production.

I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this bill and ask that all Members support this bill. I urge a “yea” vote for this incredibly important piece of legislation to maintain and to continue the work that we have done at Michoud with NASA for our country.

□ 1045

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. KIM).

Mrs. KIM of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 5746, the NASA Enhanced Use Leasing Extension Act. This is a bipartisan bill I was proud to cosponsor with Space and Aeronautics Subcommittee Chair BEYER, Ranking Member BABIN, and Representative TROY CARTER.

H.R. 5746 would allow NASA to continue leasing any underutilized, non-excess property owned by the Federal Government to private-sector entities, State and local governments, academic institutions, and other agencies involved in the research, development, and deployment of space innovation.

We need an all-hands-on-deck approach to help the U.S. lead the global space race for innovation and the development of new technologies, and this legislation aims to do exactly that. I am proud to support H.R. 5746, those on the front lines of space innovation, and aerospace manufacturers in southern California that create the tools for the United States to continue reaching new heights.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5746.

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time to speak on this bill, and I am prepared to close when necessary.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, passage of this legislation will allow NASA to better manage their infrastructure, maintain their facilities, and support the commercial space industry. The provision is fiscally responsible, as it helps NASA collect revenue from its underutilized properties.

Congress will continue to provide oversight of how NASA uses this authority in the coming years to ensure that taxpayer interests are protected and that the authority is not misused.

I would like to thank Representative FRANK LUCAS, the ranking member of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee, for his leadership on this important topic. He is a strong advocate for not only our Nation's space program but for our entire scientific enterprise, both public and private.

I would also like to thank Chairwoman EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON, my colleague from Texas, and also my friend, Chairman DON BEYER, for their efforts to expedite this bill, as well as the majority and minority staff of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee.

I would also like to thank the NASA civil servant and contractor workforce. Despite the challenges posed by COVID-19, NASA employees and contractors have been able to accomplish phenomenal achievements. From once again launching American astronauts on American rockets from American soil, to landing a rover the size of an SUV on Mars, to flying the first helicopter on another planet, NASA has not missed a stride. These achievements are a credit to the perseverance and fortitude of the entire NASA family, and I look forward to witnessing many more amazing feats in the coming weeks and months. It is an exciting time.

Finally, I would also like to recognize the passing yesterday of Mark Geyer, the former Director of Johnson Space Center. Mark was a stalwart leader, a skilled engineer, and a thoughtful friend.

Representing the Johnson Space Center afforded me the opportunity to work with Mark over the years, and I can tell you that he had a profound impact on our Nation's space program.

I would also like to wish his wife, Jackie, his three children, and the entire Geyer family my heartfelt condolences and thank them for Mark's service to NASA, the American people, and the noble endeavor of space exploration.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, I concur with my friend Dr. BABIN that we are very fortunate to be led by EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON, our chair, and FRANK LUCAS, our ranking member. It is a joy to work on this committee, and we actually work together in a good way. I would like to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BABIN), the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. CARTER), and the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. KIM) for cosponsoring this and helping put this together, and our wonderful Space and Aeronautics Subcommittee staff, who actually took the time to put the title of this bill in iambic pentameter, the NASA Enhanced Use Leasing Extension Act of 2021.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all of my colleagues to vote for this good bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5746, the “NASA Enhanced Use Lease Extension Act of 2021”.

I want to thank Chairman BEYER of the Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics for introducing this bipartisan bill, along with Subcommittee Ranking Member BABIN, Representative TROY CARTER, and Representative YOUNG KIM, as original cosponsors.

As Chair of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, I've had the privilege over the years to visit many NASA Field Centers and witness the extensive infrastructure required to support our nation's inspiring space program.

Some of those properties are underutilized and many are aging. Therefore, they can fall into disrepair.

NASA facilities, properties, and infrastructure comprise over 5,000 buildings and structures, including those at its field centers, and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

The extension of enhanced use leasing authority in this bill helps NASA manage the agency's real property, including the preservation of underutilized or unique, historic properties.

As Chairman BEYER noted, enhanced use leasing, or “EUL”, allows NASA to enter into agreements with state and local governments, academia, private sector entities, and other Federal government agencies to lease non-excess and underutilized properties at NASA.

EUL authority allows the agency to accept lease revenues, in turn helping NASA to reduce operating costs and make repairs and improvements to facility systems.

According to NASA, in Fiscal Year 2019, five NASA Centers used enhanced use leasing resulting in a total of over \$10 million in net revenue for the agency.

Congress first granted NASA authority to demonstrate enhanced use leasing at two NASA Field Centers as part the Fiscal Year 2003 Consolidated Appropriations Resolution.

The Fiscal Year 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act expanded the authority to agency-wide use.

Since then, the authority has been amended in 2008, and further amended in 2012 to allow NASA to accept in-kind considerations for leases for the purpose of developing renewable energy production facilities.

The most recent extension of EUL authority was in the Fiscal Year 2020 Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, where the authority was extended for 2 years, until December 31, 2021, the end of this year. The bill we are considering today provides a clean ten-year extension until December 31, 2031.

This longer term extension provides consistency and certainty to NASA and tenants, allowing NASA to continue existing EUL arrangements and make progress on developing new arrangements that are currently underway.

Enhanced use leasing is an important, well-used authority that benefits NASA and the many institutions that enter into EUL leases. We must act now to extend it.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote yes and pass H.R. 5746, the bipartisan “NASA Enhanced Use Lease Extension Act of 2021.”

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BEYER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5746, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

OCEAN SHIPPING REFORM ACT OF 2021

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4996) to amend title 46, United States Code, with respect to prohibited acts by ocean common carriers or marine terminal operators, and for other purposes, as amended.